



[www.winnebagoountyrta.org](http://www.winnebagoountyrta.org)

January 2022

## President's Message – Gayle Haab

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and were able to spend some time with family and friends!

The WCRTA Board held its annual retreat in December to finalize some plans for 2022! We are hopeful we will be able to meet again in person soon. You will find a schedule of our programs and events for 2022 in this newsletter and we would like to invite you to attend! Ideally, the Omicron coronavirus variant will have peaked by the time you receive this newsletter, and we hope to see a decline in the positivity rates.



We have planned to host our next general membership meeting on **Thursday, February 17, at the Stockholm Inn**. Registration is at 8:30 am with breakfast at 9 am followed by our guest speaker presentation and a short business meeting regarding proposed changes to WCRTA bylaws. Our presenter is Arnie Ames, Center for Learning in Retirement (CLR) and Speakers Bureau Chairperson. Members will order breakfast directly off the menu, and individual checks will be given by the wait staff.

At the time of producing this newsletter, we had to decide whether to meet in person, try to have a “hybrid” meeting where those that were able to meet in person could, and members that preferred to meet by Zoom could do so. The third option was to have a meeting entirely via Zoom. We are going to try the “hybrid” option, with the hope you can either join us at the Stockholm Inn or view the CLR presentation on Zoom.

*The following is a description of CLR and a link where you can view the classes that are offered:*

**Arnie Ames** from the Center for Learning in Retirement will be giving a presentation at our February meeting. CLR is a Rock Valley College program for persons 50 years of age

and older. CLR offers classes in several categories including Arts & Crafts, Computer Training, Finance, Fitness, Health & Wellness, History, Humanities, Religion, Science and Nature, Social Sciences, Special Interests & Hobbies, Tours, and Travel. CLR also offers day and multiple-day trips and social events. CLR has approximately 125 different classes planned for the Spring 2022 semester which will begin February 7. About 2/3 of the classes will be in-person at our Bell School



Road Center in Rockford, and about 1/3 will be online using Zoom. There is a \$35 per year membership fee and individual classes cost from \$5 to \$45. Many are one-session classes which cost \$15. Additional information and class schedules and news can be found at <https://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/CLR>

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PLEASE COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM BELOW AND MAIL IT TO:  
Gayle Haab, 7998 N. Main St., Rockford, IL 61103 OR EMAIL ME AT [ghaab74@gmail.com](mailto:ghaab74@gmail.com)  
NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 7, 2022.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \*Yes, I plan to attend the meeting at the Stockholm Inn on February 17 (Registration, 8:30 am) I understand I need to wear a mask in the restaurant, except while I am eating. I have been vaccinated and follow the CDC guidelines for my own safety and those around me.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I plan to attend the meeting by Zoom on February 17. You will be sent a Zoom link to your email address.

*\*Please note: If we do not have a minimum of 15 people who indicated they will attend in person, then the entire meeting and presentation will be done via Zoom. It is extremely important that you reply by February 7 for us to notify the Stockholm Inn of our numbers for their wait staff.*

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A special thank you to our treasurer Dorothy Schoonover for serving the WCRTA for the past 20 years! Dorothy did a phenomenal job as treasurer. She



did all the bookkeeping, kept detailed records of the accounts, made reports to the board, collected dues, met with auditors, and filed taxes. Dorothy also issued checks for expenses and scholarship awards, and so much more! Dorothy retired from the treasurer position on January 15, 2022. She will continue to serve on the board as our Necrology/Sunshine Chairperson. Thank you so much, Dorothy, for all you have done for WCRTA!

Our newsletter editor, Sharon Vinson, will take over as our new treasurer and continue as editor as well. Sharon has a lot of experience in this area as she was a treasurer for several different organizations. Information about where to send your dues to Sharon will be included in this newsletter. We would appreciate your continued support in renewing your dues or joining our association!

# WCRTA General Meeting Dates and Programs – 2022

## Please save these dates:

**February 17, 2022:** 8:30 AM (Breakfast at 9:00 AM) Hybrid: In-person and via Zoom. Stockholm Inn, Rockford (Center for Learning in Retirement - CLR)

**April 21, 2022:** Arrive by 10:30 AM  
Fireside Theatre, Fort Atkinson, WI (The Church Basement Ladies - A Mighty Fortress)  
\*See attached flyer to register and send in your payment.

**April 28, 2022:** TBA  
Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club (Retirement Celebration)

**June 16, 2022:** 11:30 AM (Lunch at Noon)  
Nunzio's or Gerry's (TBA) (Scholarship Presentations)

**July 2022:** TBA  
TBA (Member Appreciation Cocktail Party)

**September 15, 2022:** 11:30 AM (Lunch at Noon)  
Machine Shed, Rockford (Dr. John Ulferts)

**November 17, 2022:** 11:30 AM (Lunch at Noon)  
Thunder Bay Grille, Rockford (Reenactment by Amanda Becker)

## Two Scholarships Available

The Blanche Martin and the Fred Kunz Scholarships have been posted on our WCRTA website, [www.winnebagoountyrta.org](http://www.winnebagoountyrta.org), and the Scholarships Northern Illinois website [www.scholarshipni.com](http://www.scholarshipni.com)

Direct link to the Blanche J. Martin Scholarship  
Application open January 15, 2022 – April 15, 2022  
<https://www.scholarshipsni.com/post/blanche-martin-scholarships>

Direct link to the Fred Kunz Memorial Scholarship  
Application open January 15, 2022 – May 15, 2022  
<https://www.scholarshipsni.com/post/fred-kunz-memorial-scholarships>

### Blanche J. Martin Biography

Blanche Martin was a Grade School Teacher, Elementary Principal, Assistant Superintendent in charge of Elementary Education, Regional Superintendent of Boone and Winnebago Counties, two-term member of the State of Illinois Certification Board, Delegate to White House Conference of Education, and WCRTA Financial Advisor for many years.

Blanche will be remembered for her lifelong dedication to education. Her generous bequest to our association enables us to award, in her name, substantial scholarships to meritorious students pursuing careers in elementary school teaching positions.

Blanche Martin passed away in 2007 leaving to the Winnebago County Retired Teachers Association an endowment to be used for scholarships. Her wishes are that the scholarships be awarded to recipients who will become teachers in elementary schools. Since the inception of this scholarship, the WCRTA has awarded over \$95,000 to students pursuing a path to a degree in Elementary Education.

**Deadline for this scholarship is April 15, 2022.** For complete details and the application, go to our website [www.winnebagoountyrta.org](http://www.winnebagoountyrta.org) select Unit Info and click on Blanche J. Martin Scholarship.

Scholarship applications should be mailed to: Regional Office of Education 4, Attention: **Blanche J. Martin Scholarship Committee**, 300 Heart Boulevard, Loves Park, Illinois 61111-7516

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### **Fred Kunz Memorial Scholarship**

A memorial scholarship has been established by the family of our former WCRTA President Fred Kunz. The Kunz family established a scholarship in Fred's name for a student that is a declared education major. We appreciate the generosity of the Fred Kunz family to continue Fred's legacy and provide much needed scholarships for our future educators.

**Complete information and application can be found on our website:** [www.winnebagoountyrta.org](http://www.winnebagoountyrta.org) select Unit Info above and click on Fred Kunz Memorial Scholarship. **Deadline for this scholarship is May 15, 2022.**

Scholarship applications should be mailed to: Regional Office of Education 4, Attention: **Fred Kunz Memorial Scholarship Committee**, 300 Heart Boulevard, Loves Park, Illinois 61111-7516

Please continue to check our website [www.winnebagoountyrta.org](http://www.winnebagoountyrta.org) and Member Planet for updates and information.

### **Legislative Update**

All the legislative news that is of the biggest concern to WCRTA members involves waiting for the mid-term elections to get geared up. Illinois legislators will only be meeting this spring from January 4 to April 8. Their main task will be to pass the budget, but most of them will be focusing on the upcoming election. Candidates for the Illinois legislature will file during the second week in March, so we'll know for sure after that who's going to run. The primary will be late this year being held during the summer on June 28.

As most of you probably know, due to the recently held census, the districts for Illinois legislators have changed. Each of us will have to be careful this year to check which legislative district we will be voting in as they have all changed. Some have changed more significantly than others. As the time for the primary gets closer, and we know the candidates in the various races for these new districts, WCRTA will put out more specific information. So far, there have been articles in the paper saying that incumbents Dave Vella, Joe Sosnowski, and Maurice West will be running again along with John Cabello who will try to return to the legislature after being defeated in the last election. Watch your email or cell phone for information alerts via Member Planet from WCRTA of any candidate forums that may be set up; they often come up between issues of this Newsletter.

### **Charitable Contributions**

The Winnebago County Retired Teachers Association would like to increase the number of monetary scholarships that we can award our future teachers from Winnebago County . . . but we need your help!

As you all know, there is a severe teacher shortage. College tuition and fees continue to increase as well as the cost of student loans. We would like to provide as much financial assistance to our future educators as we can. If you would like to consider making a charitable contribution to WCRTA that can be used towards scholarships, you can make a difference in the lives of students who hope to someday be in the classroom. WCRTA is a 501c4 non-profit organization. Please consider making a charitable contribution to allow us to encourage more prospective teachers. Mail your contribution to our treasurer. See bottom of page 6 for her contact information.

## Help Grow Our Numbers

Over the past several months, the WCRTA Board has discussed ways in which we might reach and interest new retirees in joining our organization. Board members have also talked about how we might spark renewed interest among our current members. As materials are prepared for distribution to new retirees in 2022, would you be willing to share a brief testimonial about why *you* chose to join WCRTA? Most of our members probably also belong to IRTA. Why do we feel it is important to keep our local organization vibrant?

I joined WCRTA for a number of reasons. The prospect of taking great trips was certainly appealing! The chance to attend meetings and hear presentations on current issues and topics of personal interest was also an attraction. Most important was the desire to stay connected with retired teachers in my own county. I appreciate the opportunity to meet with professional educators who have common interests and share my passion for teaching.

Those of us who belong to WCRTA care about the quality of education where we live and have worked. This, in itself, is an important reason for belonging to a *local* group that will keep us apprised of current news and legislation that affects us and the communities we have served. In addition, we lean on IRTA and WCRTA to secure our pensions.

What other organization could provide so many perks at the bargain price of \$10 per year (or \$100 for a lifetime membership)? If you have a statement to share about WCRTA, please let our president, Gayle Haab, know at ghaab74@gmail.com. --Gayle Sears

NOTICE



NOTICE

Please remember to send your annual dues for 2022 if you have not already done so. Please check above your name on the label on the newsletter where you will find two codes. The one to the left is the year through which you have paid your WCRTA dues (or LL for local life). The one to the right is **the year through which you have paid your IRTA dues.**

**IRTA DUES INFORMATION:** Please call the IRTA office at 1-800-728-4782 if you have any questions about your IRTA dues. Members who are paying IRTA dues annually are encouraged to sign up for Dues Deduct payment at [www.irtaonline.org](http://www.irtaonline.org) When you sign up for Dues Deduct payment, \$2.50 will be deducted monthly from your pension. That is a total of only \$30 a year to protect your pension and your health insurance benefits. If you are a member of our local WCRTA Unit and are not a member of IRTA, please visit [www.irtaonline.org](http://www.irtaonline.org) and find out why your IRTA membership is very important and stay informed.

## Proposed Amendments to WCRTA Bylaws

The WCRTA Board has approved the following amendments to our By-Laws. The present By-Laws call for the general membership to approve the amendments as well. A vote will be taken of the

general membership at the February 17, 2022 meeting. The amendments are to add clarity to Section VIII of the By-Laws dealing with the Blanche Martin Endowment.

1. Amend B of Section 3 of Article VIII to state:

**The Endowment Committee shall use the growth of all the investments of the endowment for a calendar year ending on March 31 to fund the scholarship(s) and award presentation. Growth will include dividends, interest, capital gains, and performance gains.**

The present wording of B in Section 3 is: *The Endowment Committee shall use the interest gained for the scholarship awards.*

Rationale: The amended wording will clarify the meaning of the word "interest" in the present By-Laws. The wording also clarifies that the "growth" in the endowment funds can be used to fund not only the scholarship(s) but also the expenses involved in making the presentation of the scholarships.

2. Amend G of Section 3 of Article VIII to state:

**The Endowment Committee shall present information for approval by the WCRTA Board regarding the scholarship process which includes the recipients. The scholarship process as approved by the WCRTA Board, including the names of all scholarship recipients, will be shared with the general membership annually.**

The present wording of G in Section 3 is: *The Endowment Committee shall present information to the WCRTA Board and membership regarding the scholarship process, including the recipients.*

Rationale: The amendment makes clear the Blanche Martin Endowment Committee must get the approval of the WCRTA Board of Directors regarding the scholarship process which would include the amount of the scholarships and the number of recipients. It also clarifies that the general membership will be notified annually of the scholarship process the Board has approved.

3. Amend Section 1 of Article VIII to state:

**The purpose of the Blanche J. Martin Endowment is to establish a scholarship fund for college students majoring in elementary education. Blanche Martin scholarship money shall be issued directly to scholarship recipients. The recipient will provide receipts as to how this money was used.**

The present wording of Section 1 is: *The purpose of the Blanche J. Martin Endowment is to establish a scholarship fund for college students majoring in elementary education.*

### **Membership Request for WCRTA (for those who pay dues annually)**

Thank you for your support. Please continue your WCRTA membership by completing the following membership form and mailing it with your dues to our treasurer, Sharon Vinson, 11966 Tresemer Road, Roscoe, IL 61073-7708

Dues for annual members starting on January 1, 2022: **\$10.00, or** Life membership dues are **\$100.00.**

**Name:**

Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **City** \_\_\_\_\_

**State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferred Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

Retirement year: \_\_\_\_\_ School retired from: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of the IRTA? Yes or No IRTA Membership: Annual \_\_\_ Life \_\_\_ Dues deduct \_\_\_

## Know Your IRTA Benefits

The IRTA Board of Directors has endorsed various benefits for our members. These products and services were selected because they provide superior benefits and competitive rates. Additionally, certain benefits and services are promoted for informational purposes to the IRTA membership. A brief description of each of the current member benefits available is contained in this document. E = Endorsed Benefit, I = Informative Benefit  
\*Benefits marketed by AMBA Health, Medical & Financial

**IRTA GROUP LONG TERM CARE PROGRAM\* - E** Many people believe Medicare and Medicare Supplement insurance will pay for their long-term care. Neither Medicare nor private Medicare supplement insurance will pay for long term care. With the IRTA endorsed long term care policy, you select the daily benefit amount, elimination period, and benefit period which best suits your needs for care. This policy pays in addition to any other insurance, and premiums do not increase with age. Contact AMBA at 800.258.7041 for additional information.

**IRTA GROUP RECOVERY CARE EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM\* - E** Aetna's plan can help you manage your expenses. It offers you a level of care and comfort you deserve in case of an accident or illness that requires assistance. This Program provides Care IN YOUR HOME, Nursing Home or Assisted Living Facility, and will help with the costs of Hospitalization. Benefits are paid directly to you regardless of what is paid by your Health Insurance. To find out more about this benefit through IRTA, contact AMBA at 800-258-7041.

**IRTA GROUP HOME CARE PLUS BENEFIT PLAN\* - E** Aetna's plan gives you the freedom to choose when and where you recover. Whether working or retired, it's important to consider and plan for the impact of rising healthcare costs for hospital and at home recovery. A Home Care Plus insurance plan can help you manage your expenses and recuperate at home by covering medically necessary treatments. Benefits are paid directly to you! To find out more about this benefit available through IRTA, contact AMBA at 800-258-7041.  
\*Contact AMBA at 1.800.258.7041 for additional information on items marked with an asterisk.

**GROUP INDEXED UNIVERSAL LIFE EXPRESS BENEFIT PLAN\* - E (NEW)** (IUL Express) is an indexed universal life policy designed to provide you with: • Permanent life insurance coverage that may last for your lifetime • An accumulation value that has the potential to increase based on the performance of a market index • Flexibility for the future • Simplified underwriting that doesn't require a lengthy health inquiry

**IRTA GROUP FLEXIBLE CHOICE CANCER, HEART ATTACK & STROKE PROGRAM\* - E** This IRTA endorsed program will pay a lump sum benefit from \$5,000 to \$75,000 to use any way you like, upon a diagnosis of Cancer, or if you have a Heart Attack, Heart Surgery or Stroke. The Money comes in a lump sum payment, and is PAID DIRECTLY TO YOU, regardless of any other insurance you may have. This money can be used to help pay deductibles, rehabilitation, experimental treatments or any unexpected expenses. The program also includes a recurrence benefit which will pay upon multiple incidents.

**CANCER TREATMENT PLAN\* - E** You are provided benefits that relate to treatment and patient care upon diagnosis of cancer. This policy includes medical and non-medical expenses. Phone: 800.258.7041 Website: [myAMBAbenefits.info/irta](http://myAMBAbenefits.info/irta)

**IRTA GROUP VISION PLAN\* - E** Vision Service Plan (VSP) provides you access to their vast nationwide network of ophthalmologists and optometrists. When visiting a VSP network doctor, you'll receive an annual eye exam every 12 months\*, lenses every 12 months\*, and frames provided up to your allowance every 24 months. To learn more, or obtain enrollment information, contact AMBA. \*Co-pays apply IRTA GROUP

**DENTAL PLAN\* - E** The dental insurance plan, underwritten by Ameritas Life Insurance Corp., offers group rates for association members. This plan offers rich benefits and the luxury of using your own dentist. You also

have the option to select a network dentist and save 20-30%. To learn more, or to obtain enrollment information, contact AMBA. (continued on back side of Fireside Theatre flyer)

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY  
RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

c/o Sharon Vinson, Editor  
11966 Tresemer Road  
Roscoe, IL 61073-7708

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Non-Profit Org.  
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Permit #4466  
Rockford, IL

**We need you!** Please consider rejoining by sending your dues to our treasurer. The WCRTA BOARD appreciates your being part of our local unit and hope you find our future meetings, events, and group trips enjoyable and informative.



**THANKS TO ALL INVOLVED IN PRODUCING THIS NEWSLETTER.**

Thanks to the people who wrote articles for this newsletter and those who helped in producing it by folding, labeling, and editing. Receiving this newsletter is one of the benefits of membership in the Winnebago County Retired Teachers Association.

**WINNEBAGO LOCAL UNIT (WCRTA) NEWSLETTER**

**WINNEBAGO UNIT #6 OF IRTA**

**Printing made possible by an agreement with Scott Bloomquist at the**



